

FEDERAL PERSONNEL COUNCIL
United States Civil Service Commission
1826 K Street, N. W.
Washington 25, D. C.

EXCERPTS FROM REPORT
ON
AMENDMENT OF THE LEAVE LAWS
APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL JUNE 21, 1961

[. . . = Shows where other material has been excluded as not pertinent.
(---) = Parentheses indicate phrases added for clarity.]

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The Personnel Management Committee on the advice of the Leave and Attendance Committee has concluded the legislation to reduce the amount of annual leave granted to Federal employees should be opposed unless it is coupled with legislation to provide unemployment compensation or severance pay as a cushion against periods of unemployment.

Since 1944 the Council has recommended either unemployment compensation or severance pay. In March 1950, it was decided not to endorse severance pay at that time since unemployment compensation was considered preferable. The Council stated that it favored unemployment compensation on a state-administered basis provided that the standards for unemployment benefits, both in duration and amount, for all workers are raised to those advocated by the President.

If Federal employees were provided with unemployment compensation or severance pay, there would no longer be the need to build large leave balances as a cushion against periods of unemployment. However, it would still be desirable for the Federal Government to continue to grant its employees more liberal leave benefits than are granted employees in private industry at the present time for the following reasons:

1. The trend in private industry is to extend the leave benefits of its employees. The Federal Government has been a leader in granting liberal leave benefits and, therefore, should not drastically reduce the leave granted its employees at a time when the trend in private industry is toward more liberal leave benefits.

2. Annual leave for Federal employees covers not only vacation but leave for personal emergencies such as death and illness in the family and time off to transact personal business. In private industry it is the practice to excuse such absence without reducing vacation time.
3. A drastic reduction of leave benefits for Federal employees would tend to increase the difficulty of recruiting and holding desirable employees.
4. Accumulation of leave to a reasonable extent is an advantage both to the employee and to the employing agency, as indicated below.

The Committee also agreed that Federal employees should be allowed to accumulate leave to a reasonable extent even though provision is made for unemployment compensation or severance pay.

Such a provision is desirable for the employee as a means of building a cushion against personal emergencies such as prolonged illness, arising during employment and for an occasional extended vacation of longer duration than could be provided by leave accrued in a single year.

It is also desirable for the employing agency in connection with emergencies. An agency finds it prudent to deny full leave when the program pressures are heavy. More often than not, however, emergency conditions subside after awhile, or means are taken to meet them, so that leave, once administratively denied, may be taken. The payment of cash for forfeited leave will be greater if leave accumulations are severely restricted.

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With the above considerations in mind the Committee suggests that any recommendation with respect to granting leave to Federal employees under a graduated leave system be coupled with recommendations for unemployment compensation and the establishment of a leave reserve fund to cover lump-sum payments on separation. The following specific points are suggested for inclusion in such a recommendation:

1. UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

That unemployment compensation be provided for Federal employees on a state-administered basis provided that the standards for unemployment benefits, both in duration and amount, for all workers are raised to those advocated by the President.

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2. D. (LEAVE ACCUMULATION)

The amount of accumulated annual leave that may be carried forward from one calendar year to another should not exceed the number of leave hours for two calendar years at the rate applicable to the employee's length of service.

2. That recommendation be made for cash payment for annual leave above the maximum accumulation allowed for which employees have applied and which they have been prevented from taking.

3. LEAVE RESERVE

That a leave reserve fund in line with that recommended by the leave reserve Subcommittee in the attached memorandum of June 14, 1955 be established to provide for lump-sum payment of annual leave on separation from the service.

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Attachment

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